

Unity in diversity: Working towards a common goal to improve optometry and vision research in Europe

The year 2021 has started in the tracks of an ongoing global pandemic with the need for developing new ways of providing health care. The challenges imposed by the pandemic forced primary health care practitioners including optometrists and dispensing opticians to convert most face-to-face consultations and follow-up visits to virtual or telephone consultations to prevent the spread of the disease. New collaborations have evolved within and across disciplines in both research and clinical practice. This will continue to benefit both patients and communities in the future. For example, the use of telemedicine between clinicians, as reported by De Lott and colleagues from the University of Michigan, increased by up to 86.2% after the pandemic in response to the increasing demand. The optometric community has successfully adapted to delivering both patient care and management, and education digitally.

During the pandemic, we have all experienced the necessity of being able to adapt to rapidly changing knowledge and digest vast amounts of digital information, and the increased demand this puts on our ability to be critical and develop evidence based clinical practice. As new knowledge and tools are becoming part of our everyday practice, new challenges and the need for new skill sets become apparent. More research is required into digital communication, digital and visual health literacy, and how optometrists can contribute to promoting health in all patients with diverse conditions and needs. Clinicians, academics, and researchers have all been innovative and embraced new measures to continue to evolve optometric health care and

services.

There have also been some important developments to the journal during the first half of 2021. In order to adapt and promote SJOVS as a relevant and high-quality journal for research within optometry and vision science, we have added “online first” articles once new articles are accepted and in-press. This enables a rapid and easy open access of new research, increasing the visibility of SJOVS among both readers and authors. This spring, SJOVS has had three online-first articles with one of these getting over 100 views.

Another change has been to expand the editorial board with three new members, and to establish an advisory board with three well known international researchers. All these researchers come from different countries and have different optometric backgrounds and research experience. With their diverse competence they will contribute to developing SJOVS into a leading European journal for research within optometry and vision science.

On behalf of SJOVS, we wish you all a safe and peaceful summer.

SJOVS Editorial board

Reference: De Lott, L. B., Newman-Casey, P. A., Lee, P. P., Ballouz, D., Az-zouz, L., Cho, J., Valicevic, A. N., & Woodward, M. A. (2021). Change in Ophthalmic Clinicians' Attitudes Toward Telemedicine During the Coronavirus 2019 Pandemic. *Telemedicine journal and e-health: the official journal of the American Telemedicine Association*, 27(2), 231–235. <https://doi.org/10.1089/tmj.2020.0222>

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